

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-9 were pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended to even more clearly recite features of the present invention. No new matter has been entered. Claims 1-9 will remain pending herein upon entry of this Amendment. For the reasons stated below, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action mailed August 1, 2005 ("final rejection" or "Action"), claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyakawa (U.S. Patent 4,974,098). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

On reviewing the final rejection, it appears that there is Examiner confusion regarding the term "linear image reading region" and the term "light-receiving elements", as well as erroneous interpretation of Miyakawa. Specifically, it is suspected that the Examiner may have equated the "linear image reading region" with the linear array provided by the plurality of light-receiving elements. Note that the Examiner has identified "linear image reading region" by reference number (10), which actually designates the linear sensor of Miyakawa (see page 2 of the Office Action). Actually, the image reading region is identified by reference number 1A in Fig. 3 of Miyakawa.

Thus, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that a transparent cover plate provides a linear image reading region that has a first length.

In Miyakawa, the linear sensor 10 has dark-time output regions 12, 13 (shielded by a light-blocking coating). Since the image reading region 1A overlaps the regions defined by trimming lines 31, the dark-time output regions 12, 13 of the linear sensor 10 unavoidably detects the trimming lines 31, which then causes fluctuations in the output level of the dark-time output regions 12, 13 and adversely affects black level adjustment, as clearly described from column 1, line 52 to column 2, line 9.

In the final rejection, the Examiner holds that Miyakawa has the light receiving elements at the extremity (dark-time output regions 12, 13) shielded and outside the placement region 32 (see page 3, first paragraph of the Action). Though this holding per se is correct, the Examiner may have disregarded the fact that the dark-time output regions 12, 13 of the linear sensor 10 are located inside the image reading region 1A, as pointed out above.

The Examiner also states that the lens 2 of Miyakawa is adjustable. However, physically considered, the lens 2 is adjustable only with respect to its position (but not with respect to its length) for focusing or scanning.

In the last paragraph, page 2 of the Action, the Examiner further has pointed out that the applicant has failed to address the advantages of having the lens length being greater than the image reading region. However, it is pointed out that the advantages of the present invention come from the fact that the light-shielding member covers at least one light-receiving element disposed at the extremity outside the first length of the linear reading region (emphasis added). Since those of the light-receiving elements covered by the light-shielding member are not

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affected by the images (such as the trimming lines 31 of Miyakawa) inside the image reading regions, they provide more reliable black level adjustment.

Since Miyakama fails to disclose or suggest the features of the present invention as claimed and as elaborated upon above, Applicants respectfully request that the §103 rejection of the claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

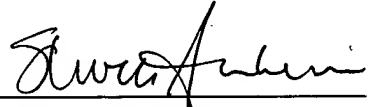
In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted

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